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## Do and Don't's of Contracting Research for Developmental Impact

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**Session: Sharefair and learning to Innovate**

### Key Message

How you contract and who you contract to carry out research for development is the biggest determinant of what the outcomes will be. But this is generally ignored by donors and research managers.

## Summary

The CPWF has eight years of experience in contracting research for development. We describe the main lessons learned, including:

- Use commissioned, not competitive processes to build coherent research for development programs
- Be as clear as possible about partnership and budget share expectations right from the start
- Invest time and resources in proposal development as room for maneuver is much less once contracts are signed, and a shared vision of change is fundamental
- think creatively about partnership, beyond the usual suspects, and use network maps to help you
- Make this a collaborative and accompanied process
- Build programs around compelling development challenges with a clear theory of change

- Work with theory of change from the beginning: in planning, priority setting, monitoring, communications and evaluation
- Keep funds back for emerging opportunity and knowledge management, especially exchange visits and cross-site learning
- Plan for flexibility in project and program work plans, within contractual restrictions; but stay true to your principles